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Combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of States parties due in 2014

Suriname*

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List of abbreviations

ADEKUS	Anton De Kom University of Suriname
AHKCO	Academy for Arts and Culture (Academie voor Hoger Kunst-en Cultuuronderwijs)
AOV	General Old Age Pension
ART	Standard Antiretroviral Therapy (AIDS)
BEIP	Basic Education Improvement Project
BOS	Bureau for Information and Study Choices
BPfA	Beijing Plan for Action
CAREC	Caribbean Epidemiology Centre
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GFR	General Fertility Rate
GOS	Government of Suriname
HDI	Human Development Index
HPV	Human papillomavirus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOL	Institute for the Training of Teachers (Instituut voor de Opleiding van Leraren)
IUD	Intra Urine Device
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean

LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual
LISP	Low Income Shelter Program
LMISP	Low Middle Income Shelter Program
LOBO	Training for Basic Level Teachers
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Statistics
NBG	National Bureau for Gender Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PIH	Pregnancy Induced Hypertension
PMTCT	Preventing Mother-to-child Transmission of HIV
PTC	Polytechnic College
RGD	Regional Health Centre (Regionale Gezondheidsdienst)
SAO	Vocational Training Institute, Ministry of Labour
SPWE	Foundation for Productive Works (Stichting Productieve Werkeenheden)
SRD	Surinamese Dollars
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAS	Telecommunication Authority Suriname
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UN/CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

Preface

By ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Government of Suriname (GOS) committed itself to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms. The GOS has endorsed this commitment with its implementation through national development plans, where gender equality objectives are underlined whenever a new government team is established. Government and various NGOs have continuously mobilized national support for CEDAW implementation, promoting, implementing and institutionalizing projects and programs aimed at gender equality.

The implementation, ensuring compliance with the international treaties and the national gender development plans, lies with the Ministry of Home Affairs, more specifically the National Bureau for Gender Policy (NBG). In doing so, the NBG monitors the implementation of CEDAW and the Convention of Belém do Pará of various government institutions and committees, gender focal points, civil society and international development partners, using the Integrated Gender Action Plan as the basis for operations. Gender Action Plans are being developed as multi-annual plans, based on joint strategies of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Suriname has ratified international conventions on the rights of women and children. As an important follow-up, a series of national laws has been produced to harmonize Surinamese law with international treaties. Monitoring the implementation of these national legislative products is being conducted, among others, through periodic country reports to the responsible United Nations structures.

The GOS has so far submitted three periodic reports reflecting the status of women in the 16 areas of the CEDAW. The periodic reporting serves as a reminder of the responsibility the GOS has to ensure there is equality between women and men and gives insight into the achievements, the challenges and the gaps.

This combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report is a reflection of the implementation of the Convention over the past 12 years.

Introduction

1. This CEDAW country status report, which covers the period 2002-2014 (fourth, fifth and sixth report) is based on information provided by relevant stakeholders through numerous workshops which were held around a variety of themes related to the advancement of women and children, with representatives of governmental institutes, gender focal points, other civil society representatives and international development partners like UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO, and UNEP-Small Grants Programme.

2. To date, Suriname has made significant improvements in the fields of enrolment of women in education, reduction of maternal mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, adoption/revision of legislation and defining and implementing of various national plans, programs and projects.

3. Regarding women in education, women have made progress with gross enrolment rates from primary education to university level education. Initiatives have been taken to abolish the use of sexist language in textbooks and illustrations in primary school books, while a strong gender focus has been put on pedagogic processes. However, teaching practices perpetuate the prevailing pattern of gender dominance, which encourages segregation in choice of vocational and technical training and in choice of careers and professions.

4. In the reporting period, progress has been made with regard to legal products which have already been adopted by the National Assembly, with regard to draft legislation submitted to the National Assembly, as well as regarding legislation in the process of drafting, as set out in the information on Articles 1 and 2 of this report. This progress is the result of measures taken by government and civil society.

5. Women as individuals or in organized settings have constantly made full and strong efforts for drawing attention to the existing shortcomings and have lobbied for new or adapted instruments to serve the needs and interests in defending and promoting their rights.

6. In addition to the progress mentioned in legislation and education, progress has been achieved in other fields such as:

- An increase in the proportion of women in the judiciary body, in the legal profession in the public prosecution office, and at the local level of politics and decision-making (*See Article 7 and supporting tables 7.10 to 7.14*).
- Significant improvements at the level of reproductive health.
- Public discussions on issues such as domestic violence (against women), sexual harassment at the workplace or the position of inequality of women living in common-law settings.
- Awareness on some values that are private, traditional or cultural and that are used to justify or perpetuate gender inequality and male dominance (sexual harassment, (domestic) violence (against women), the position of women in decision-making).

7. Although positive developments have been achieved, significant structural problems remain and contribute to continuing and intensifying gender gaps in a variety of areas, much to the disadvantage of women. Suriname should consolidate and build upon the progress reached so far, because profound changes are needed.

8. In some ministries marked progress has been made regarding the position of women at decision-making levels, but in other ministries women have not been appointed to higher levels of administration or management, isolating them from participation in policy making.

9. Positions filled by females increased at the level of parliament and in the Council of Ministers, however, in practice, public and political party discussions suggest that the appointment of many women to political posts are treated as a privilege within political parties rather than a fundamental right of women.

10. Disparities between urban, rural and rural interior areas show a gap among women of these regions on a number of issues that also urgently need to be bridged. Challenges include making the differences more visible and developing differentiating policies in order to close the existing gaps. There are major shortcomings in official data that need to indicate improvements or setbacks in women's condition and status.

11. Various important statistics are not disaggregated making it difficult to obtain gender breakdowns, as is the case with data on access to land, production, credit, skills training, sports and recreation.

12. The next chapter of the report describes the way Suriname has implemented the CEDAW during the period 2002-2014, analysing the most significant progress and trends with available data and statistics.

13. The government of Suriname is pleased to present this report and uses the opportunity to reaffirm its ongoing commitment to promote and create conditions for gender equality and the full exercise of the rights of women in Suriname.

Articles 1 and 2
Definition of discrimination and suitable measures

14. As reported previously, the principle of equality of men and women is laid down in Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname (the "Constitution").

15. The Integral Gender Plan of Action 2000-2005 contained specific actions aimed at harmonizing national legislation with international conventions regarding women and children, which have been ratified by the Surinamese government. This plan of action was evaluated in 2005 and a new Gender Action Plan was developed in 2006 for the period of 2006-2010.

16. Since 2002 the following steps have been taken by the government in its efforts to eliminate discrimination against women.

Ratification/signature of international instruments

- On May 25, 2007, the UN Convention against Transnational Crime and related Optional Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air was ratified.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was ratified on May 18, 2012.
- In May 2002 Suriname signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- The Convention of Belém do Pará, which was ratified on February 19, 2002 has been published by the government in the Treaty Paper of Suriname.

Adoption of national laws

- Adoption of the Law to Combat Domestic Violence (2009). This law aims to protect victims of domestic violence at an early stage through a fast procedure. According to this law, victims of domestic violence can request a restraining order. At the initiative of the Women's Rights Centre a committee was formed, consisting of legal and gender experts of NGOs, the Anton de Kom University of Suriname (ADEKUS) and the Ministry of Justice and Police, which started with the formulation in mid-2001 of the special law on domestic violence, and a training on domestic violence organized for magistrates, lawyers, prosecutors and police officers in 2003 with the assistance of external experts. In 2013 the same officials and counsellors on violence were trained on proper interpretation and implementation of the domestic violence law.
- Adoption of the law on stalking (2012). According to this law preventive measures can be taken by the public prosecutor to protect a potential victim. Information about this law has been provided through the domestic violence networks that are installed by the foundation Stop Violence against Women in 5 districts. Furthermore, the text of this law has been disseminated to visitors of an information fair in the District of Commewijne. Apart from this specific legislation, the penal code has been simultaneously amended. A new provision regarding stalking has been added, which punishes the stalker with a maximum of 4 years of prison and a fine of maximum SRD 50.000.
- Adoption of the law on National Basic Health Insurance (2014)
- Adoption of the law 2014 on General Pension (2014)
- Adoption of the law on Minimum Hourly Wage (2014)

Revisions of laws

Penal Code revision

- With regard to trafficking in women and minors, the Penal Code has been revised in 2006. As a direct result both sexes are protected against trafficking while the penalties have been extended, especially when victims who are

minors are involved. Forced prostitution is now punishable and is related to trafficking in persons.

- With regard to sexual crimes, the Penal Code has been revised in 2009. Rape within marriage and common-law union, rape of men, child pornography, youth prostitution (from the age of sixteen to eighteen), among others, have been penalized. The penalties have also been extended.

Moral Law Revision

17. The restrictive access of adolescents to sexual information and contraceptives has been removed as part of the revision (see Article 6).

18. The age of consent for marriage, allowed in the civil code, was raised in 2003 from 13 to 15 years for girls and from 15 to 17 years for boys. Currently, draft legislation proposes to increase the age of consent to 18 for both boys and girls in accordance with CRC.

Revision of the Act on the Regulation of the Legal Status of Civil Servants ('Personeelswet')

19. With regard to Article 45 paragraph 4 of this Act, in 2003 the Government Act on Pregnancy/ Maternity Leave was revised and made more flexible. Instead of the former compulsory 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after child birth, pregnant women can, after consultation with a doctor, continue to work up to two weeks prior to childbirth and resume service 10 weeks after childbirth.

Elections Act revision

20. Amendment of Article 15 paragraph 2, Articles 41 and 57, and Article 73 paragraph 1 of the Election Act, took place in March 2005. The amendment means that married women or widows are no longer being registered automatically under the name of their husband or late husband on the list of candidates or on the election register. Women are now registered under their maiden name, and those who wish have an option to make a special request to add their husband's name. This amendment was applied for the first time during the general elections of 2010.

Draft Legislation

Legislation on paid maternity leave for the private sector

21. Paid maternity leave has been added to the draft civil code. Some companies have also included paid maternity leave in the company's collective agreement on terms of employment. Women employed in the private sector by companies without a collective labour agreement have no legal coverage for maternity leave services provided by their employers.

Law on Sexual Harassment

22. Draft legislation on "Sexual harassment at the Workplace" has been formulated as a combined effort of the Ministry of Home Affairs (NBG) and an NGO (Ilse Henar Foundation for Women's Rights). This was a result of the 3-year programme (2008-2011) on the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at

the workplace as implemented by the Foundation. The draft has been discussed at several national platforms involving all relevant stakeholders. This draft legislation is currently being finalized.

Civil Code (Draft Revision)

23. The Ministry of Justice and Police in general has used the CEDAW and the CRC as a basis for revising the Civil Code.

24. In this Draft:

- Decree C11 on the Removal of the Legal Incapacity of Married Women has been accentuated, based on evaluations of its implementation; in practice some financial institutions still enforce outdated rules on legal incapacitation, although members of the public often do not commence court cases;
- Paternity has been incorporated;
- Cohabitation has been acknowledged, setting criteria for legally recognizing a period of 10 years of living together; rights to remuneration; rights to alimentation; rules for payment of rent and for legal agreements on cohabitation.

25. With regard to the following legal provisions no progress has been made since 2002:

- Equal Treatment of Men and Women
- Establishment of a Bureau dealing with complaints on gender discrimination
- Labour Law: start amendment of labour legislation from women's point of view
- Holiday Act
- Identity Act: No progress in the process to amend Annex 1 of S.B. 1976 no. 10, granting married women free choice of using the surname of their husband on their Identity Card;
- Travel and Secondment: Amendment of Art. 4 of the Decree on Travel and Secondment (National Gazette 1944 no. 84, as amended by State Decree the 1993 State Resolution no. 8).
- Accident Regulation: the amendment of Art. 6, paragraph 3, of the Accident Regulation (National Gazette 1947 no. 145, as last amended by State Decree the 1983 State Resolution no. 8) with respect to the recognition of cohabitation for payment of the breadwinner is on the list of priorities and a special committee will be installed to address this matter.

Rights of Indigenous and Tribal People

26. In 2007 Suriname supported the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); legislation related to legal recognition on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially the land rights, is not yet in place. In the same year, the Inter-American Court of Justice decided among other things, that Suriname should demarcate the land Saramacca people traditionally use and should legally recognize collective land rights. In 2013 a Presidential Commissioner on Land Rights was appointed by the President, while the Bureau Land Rights was established.

Rights of persons with disabilities

27. Suriname has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The Government is of the view that all persons with disabilities are equal members of society and need to exercise the same rights as others.

Article 3
National and institutional policies for the advancement of women

28. The following national mechanisms exist for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women:

- The NBG, a department within the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for formulation, coordination, evaluation and monitoring of the gender policy;
- Gender Focal Points at the majority of ministries as part of the gender mainstreaming within the government;
- Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies, ADEKUS;
- Bureau Women and Child Policy, Ministry of Justice and Police.

National Gender Policy and the National Bureau for Gender Policy

29. Government's commitment with regard to development and implementation of gender equality policy is underlined in the National Development Plans of all governments since Suriname ratified CEDAW.

30. The Integral Gender Action Plans 2000-2005; 2006-2010 and the Gender Work Plan 2013 are based on the programmes of action of the MDG's, ICPD, CEDAW, the Belém do Pará Convention, BPFA, Government Statements 2005-2010, 2010-2016, National Government Programmes for corresponding periods and on the evaluation of the implementation of former Plans of Action. Priorities as formulated in the Integral Gender Action Plans involve institutional arrangements, poverty, economy and the labour market, voice and decision-making, violence against women, education, health, media and environment. It provides a framework for implementing initiatives and actions under these priority areas by various key institutions/players at governmental and civil society level, and at the local community, district and national level.

31. The current Gender Work Plan 2013 contains five priority areas:

- Decision-making
- Education
- Health
- Labour, income and poverty
- Violence

32. These priority areas will also be part of the National Gender Policy Plan for the period 2016-2020.

Institutional arrangements

33. As a main basis to enable an effective implementation of the national gender policy and the related multi-annual action plans, the NBG has concentrated on gender mainstreaming, harmonization of national legislation and gender sensitization. The role of NGOs has been considered of key importance for the NBG in formulation, implementation and evaluation of its policy.

Mainstreaming

34. In the context of mainstreaming, the two important multidisciplinary committees, the National Committee on Gender Legislation (government and NGOs) and the National Steering Group on Domestic Violence (government) have continued their activities.

35. In addition, certain government ministries have implemented some important activities, concentrating on the following:

- The Ministry of Justice and Police: initiated a variety of legislative products, measures and institutions aimed at combating violence against women; it implemented a gender sensitizing programme, training a variety of high judicial and government officials and key players at the civil society level. The Ministry is running a Women and Child Policy Bureau;
- The Ministry of Education: has played a role in gender sensitizing teachers and continued implementation of the pilot Basic Life Skills Programme aimed at sensitizing students and pupils on gender equality as related to culture and tradition;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries has paid attention to gender equality in the agricultural sector policy since 2005. During the agricultural census of 2008, gender data was gathered from the agricultural sector; and
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs: implemented affirmative action related to the appointment of female ambassadors, consuls general, a female permanent secretary and female heads of offices, resulting in a major proportion of women at the highest level of the Foreign Service, in the Ministry as well as in embassies, consulates and in delegations to represent the country in international meetings.

National Committees

36. The National Committee on Gender Legislation was already mentioned in the previous country report of Suriname. The Committee, which was operating since 2001 with intervals, was tasked with continuously reviewing the national legislation in light of CEDAW and other important International Conventions and to present concrete legislative amendments to the government.

37. The National Steering Group on Domestic Violence was established in 2008 after establishing a cooperation agreement aimed at improving integration and monitoring of domestic violence policies and programmes, involving the Ministries of Home Affairs, Justice and Police, Education, Regional Development, Social

Affairs and Housing and Health. The Steering Group on Domestic Violence consists of representatives of these six ministries and is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Police.

38. In 2010, a National Platform Domestic Violence, consisting of NGOs and other institutions, has been established to advise the National Steering Group on Domestic Violence and to provide support in formulating a national policy plan aimed at structurally combating domestic violence.

The role of NGOs in implementing gender policy

39. Suriname has a history of close collaboration between the government and NGOs for the advancement of women. NGOs provide the government with important data and with feedback and support on all national gender programme components involving women's equality and women's rights. They themselves implement multi-annual programmes in many areas which coincide with the national gender action plans, such as domestic violence, education, gender sensitization, and gender awareness, awareness on women's rights, economic empowerment, credit management, legal aid, politics and decision-making. Women's organizations are regularly consulted by several ministries and international organizations to participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy at national level. In 2012, a Gender Dialogue has been established, enabling governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to jointly prepare and evaluate annual gender action plans. In the process of preparing the 2013 Gender Work plan, NGOs have been actively involved by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Promotion of human rights

40. In this reporting period, publicity has been given to the CEDAW, the Concluding comments of the CEDAW, the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women through:

- Distribution of the texts in Dutch and English to various stakeholders, such as the National Assembly, ministers, directors, deputy directors of government departments.
- Yearly brochures.
- Yearly newspaper articles.
- An introductory presentation on gender for high-level government officials in 2007 and 2008, organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the UNFPA. Ministers, directors and deputy directors of government departments were informed on gender and gender related issues and on Suriname's international commitments.
- Training in 2009 and 2010 of judges, lawyers and prosecutors in child rights and child protection measures by the Ministry of Justice and Police with support from UNICEF.

- Formulation of an Action Plan for Children 2009-2014, based on the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in May 2000 and January 2007. This action plan also includes activities related to the promotion of children's rights to both boys and girls.
- Completion of a human rights program of ± 9 months by eighteen officials from the government (June 2011 March 2012). The goal of the program was to contribute to the further incorporation of the international and regional human rights treaties and declarations in the national legal framework and to improve the protection and promotion of human rights. This program was implemented by the Ministry of Justice and Police in collaboration with the UNDP.
- Training of media workers, NGOs and CSOs in human rights in the period 2009-2010. Information was provided on the various human rights conventions, methods, resources and approach to better highlight human rights issues and to promote these within society. This training was organized by the Ministry of Justice and Police in collaboration with the UNDP.

41. The NGOs also promote human rights, and women and children's rights through education and training, workshops, conferences, publishing of articles in newspapers and through radio and television programs.

42. With regard to the Optional Protocol, it can be noted that Suriname is in favour of ratifying this protocol, but that certain conditions must be in place prior, such as the adoption of appropriate legal measures.

Challenges

43. There are still some necessary steps to be taken in order to translate the constitutional principles barring discrimination into domestic legislation, as set out in Article 16 and to reach the goals as set in the National Gender Action Plan.

44. Major constraints are encountered with:

- Monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of policy commitments.
- The structure between NBG and the gender focal points as part of the mainstreaming structure.
- The current position of gender focal points, who have inadequate influence in overall gender policy development by their respective ministries.
- Insufficient gender sensitivity at the decision-making level of the ministries.
- Lack of gender-based database to take informed decisions and to sensitize policy-makers.

Article 4
Temporary special measures

45. Since 2005, the Ministry of Home Affairs and NGOs have undertaken activities with the aim to put the quota system on the legislative agenda and to increase awareness on the importance of equal participation in public life and decision-making positions. Activities in this regard are mentioned in Article 7.

Article 5
Elimination of prejudices and gender stereotyping

46. As stated previously, the Government of Suriname recognizes the lack of gender awareness as one of the major obstacles in the process of the elimination of prejudice and of all other practices, based on the idea of superiority and inferiority of sexes, irrespective of ethnic and social class differences.

47. The Government has introduced programmes through formal education as important tools to bring about change in gender stereotyping and consistent perceptions of women as being inferior to male counterparts, as property of men, as solely domestically oriented and not qualified for policy and decision-making.

48. The Ministry of Education has promoted a number of policies and actions aimed at eliminating factors which tend to perpetuate gender inequalities (*Table 10.6 Gender Indicators for Education*):

- Textbooks and illustrations of several disciplines (history, nature education, and geography) have been revised in order to give a more gender balanced perspective, however on a small scale;
- As part of the Basic Education Improvement Project (BEIP, part I), from 2004-2011 all principals and deputy heads of primary and secondary schools and kindergarten teachers were trained in gender equality;
- The Ministry has instructed BEIP management to include gender equality in the implementation of BEIP II, 2012-2016;
- The Basic Life Skills Programme, that is being implemented since 1997 for pupils of the 5th and 6th grades of primary schools and the first two grades of secondary schools, includes issues of gender and sexuality aimed at changing social, cultural and traditional gender patterns;
- Inclusion of gender training courses in tertiary educational institutions, including the teachers academy;
- Two departments of the ADEKUS include a gender training course in their curriculum;
- As part of its programme implementation, the Bureau for Educational Information and Study Facilities (B.O.S.) has held several dialogues related to study choices for women and gender equality;
- Developed gender awareness material for radio and television and disseminates these through NGO partners and Government.

49. Apart from the abovementioned efforts there were no structural long-term national programmes, strategies and indicators developed to eliminate prejudice against women. Although textbooks have been developed and teachers have been trained, the Basic Life Skills Programme still has the status of a pilot project, and as a result the actual integration of this curriculum in primary and junior secondary education has not been implemented yet.

50. Despite the advances achieved with regard to the removal of gender stereotyping in education, discriminatory cultural practices still persist in textbooks and in the educational processes.

51. Even though the NBG has involved media in several activities, the Government itself has no special media programme dealing with gender issues and has not installed any official body to monitor the media on gender stereotyping, nor has it trained or sensitized media workers.

Article 6
Trafficking of women and exploitation through prostitution

52. Systematic efforts both at governmental and non-governmental level resulted in legislation combating human trafficking.

53. The revision of the Surinamese Penal Code (2006), which now explicitly penalizes all forms of internal and cross-border human trafficking, including child prostitution and trafficking is a clear result of these efforts. As a result of the revision, both sexes are protected against trafficking, while the penalties have been extended, including penalties for child prostitution and trafficking. The ratification of the "Palermo Protocol" (2007) to prevent and combat Trafficking in Persons, especially in women and children, is another clear result of the Government's commitment to combat human trafficking.

54. The National Assembly approved the revision of the Moral Law (as part of the Penal Code) in July 2009 (S.B. 2009 No. 122). This revision is in line with UN conventions that have been ratified by Suriname, i.e.: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, prostitution and child pornography; the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime including its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

55. The Ministry of Justice and Police has implemented a series of activities in the sphere of awareness, training stakeholders such as civil servants, media workers, religious leaders, representatives of NGOs, private companies and trade unions. An anti-trafficking webpage and Anti Trafficking Hotline of the Police Corps have been launched.

56. In 2006, a special Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Unit was established as part of the Police Corps, tasked with investigation of cases of human trafficking and with education and awareness on trafficking. This unit regularly inspects brothels in the coastal area and in the interior, to identify victims of prostitution and trafficking. The Public Prosecutor's Department also established a special Trafficking in Persons Desk.

57. The TIP Unit has recorded 16 cases of human trafficking between 2004 and 2013. The majority of victims were females and children (90 per cent), of Surinamese or Guyanese origin, while the majority of cases were related to sexual exploitation (13 out of 16 cases).

58. Until now, most victims have been assisted by initiatives from family, friends or NGOs, but there is a clear need for a structured governmental and/or non-

governmental programme or body, which is equipped to provide adequate professional support. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is in the process of establishing a shelter "safe house" for victims of trafficking.

59. There is no reliable data available on prosecutions related to sexual abuse of children, though this type of abuse is penalized by law which has been revised whereby articles were expanded in order to increase the sanctions.

60. There are signs of an ICT related trend in child sexual abuse and exploitation, the last few years, including cell phone pornography. The distribution of pornography through a data carrier, for example a cell phone, is penalized by law. Until now, children or youth proved to be both victims and abusers. The non-governmental organization Rachab (former Maxi Linder) provides social assistance to child victims of prostitution and/or trafficking.

61. In order to provide for better streamlining and monitoring of all governmental anti-trafficking initiatives and activities, and to develop national strategies and a coherent and sustainable national programme, the Minister of Justice and Police installed the inter-ministerial Working Group "Counter-Trafficking in Persons", resulting in the formulation of the National Strategy and National Plan of Action "Route to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2014. The establishment of a data management system, prevention, counselling, rehabilitation and social integration of victims, formulation of an information and awareness campaign, formulation of rules and procedures for misleading application calls are some of the important aspects of this national programme, which also includes strategies to reach out to women and children from rural areas and the interior.

62. Together with this national document, the Government also approved the "*Schakelketting 2.0* New Government Infrastructure to Combat Trafficking in Persons" (a chainlink). The new infrastructure is needed to successfully implement the strategy, because the current government infrastructure does not function properly. The Working Group "Counter-Trafficking in Persons" is preparing for the activation of the new infrastructure.

63. Generally, prostitution by adults itself is not included in the Penal Code as a crime, with the exception of street prostitution (Police Criminal Law, Article 65). In practice, however, only street sex workers who misbehave are being prosecuted.

64. On the other hand, youth prostitution is included in the Penal Code as a crime (Article 303a). A person who has sexual contact with a sex worker who has reached the age of 16 but is under the age of 18, is punishable.

65. Sexual abuse of children (under the age of 12)/youth (from age 12 and not having reached the age of 16, is also punishable by the Penal Code (Article 297 and 298).

66. Exploitation of sex workers in cases of human trafficking is considered a crime, according to the Penal Code (Article 307).

Article 7
Political and public life

The right of women to vote and their right to political participation

67. Pursuant to Article 52 paragraph 2 and Article 53 of the Constitution, women as well as men can participate in the general, free and secret elections for the bodies of popular representation.

68. Requirements for electing legislative bodies (the National Assembly, the Resort Council, the District Council) are not discriminatory (Constitution, Art. 57), nor are women considered to be among the groups excluded from participation. There are no provisions in the Decree Political Organizations (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1987 no.61) which directly impede or restrict entry of women into politics. This decree states, among others, that political parties must be open to everyone, irrespective of race and religious beliefs.

69. Some discriminatory articles of the Election Act have been revised in March 2005. Since the revision of articles 15, 41, 57 and 73 of the Election Act, female candidates who are married or widowed have the option, upon written request, to register under their maiden name adding the name of their husband or late husband. During the general elections of 2010 a number of 1360 married women used this option for the first time and subsequently registered under their maiden name adding the name of their husband, while another 297 registered adding the name of their late husband.

70. Overall, the total number of eligible voters decreased between 2005 and 2010 from 333,985 to 322,625. The number of male voters decreased from 167,514 to 160,441 and the number of female voters from 166,471 to 162,184. There was no significant proportional change between the number of male and female voters in both electoral years (50 per cent - 50 per cent).

Women's right to be eligible for general elections

71. Neither the Constitution of Suriname nor other national legislation discriminates between men and women with respect to participation in political and public life.

72. The fact that the number of women elected for parliament has decreased by 15 per cent since the general elections of 2005, indicates that the political culture in the selection and nomination of female candidates for representation in parliament is still an impediment to eliminate gender inequality regarding women's eligibility for general elections. No government measures in the sphere of enacting legislation on gender quota have been taken to contribute to an increase of the representation of women at the political level and greater numbers of women in power.

73. However, the fact that women's positions in parliament and government are declining has encouraged initiatives to promote affirmative action and quota representation of women in parliament and government. In 2010, the Ministry of Home Affairs organized an open discussion on the introduction of a quota policy in Suriname entitled "Quota Policy and Promoting the Participation of Women in Politics". In the same year, the Ilse Henar Foundation for Women's Rights organized

a follow up workshop in collaboration with the Women Parliament Forum, the Democracy Unit of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Parties decided to promote the drafting of legislation regarding gender quota. As part of its annual 'March of Women' campaign, Projekta has organized several discussions on this topic and in addition published some booklets.

74. The realization of gender equality in politics is a high priority for the current speaker and deputy speaker of the National Assembly. In February 2012, a round table discussion on "Gender and Politics" was organized in collaboration with the UNDP-Suriname office. In the second round table discussion, held in June 2012, the focus was on legalizing gender quota for women in politics and resulted in the formulation of an action plan for the coming years.

75. With regard to the general elections of 2015, the National Assembly also carried out activities to increase the number of women in parliament, such as the project "More Women in Decision-making 2015" with the purpose to mobilize commitment of political parties to nominate more women as parliament candidates, for management positions or political administrative positions; strengthen self-confidence self-awareness of politically active women within political parties/potential candidates (how to present yourself); increase awareness on the importance of having more women (equal basis) in politics.

Women holding senior positions in political parties

76. A comparison of the number of women elected to parliament and their ranking on the list of candidates of their respective parties during the general elections of 2005 and 2010 shows that part of the problem of the low number of women elected in 2010 is linked with women's ranking on their party's list of candidates. Only in one district (District of Brokopondo) one woman was positioned in 2nd place and subsequently elected in her district. Only two women were re-elected in 2010 for parliament, both in the District of Paramaribo, i.e. the speaker and deputy speaker, and this was the first time in the history of Suriname that both seats were held by women, and from opposing parties as well, namely coalition and opposition.

77. The fact that the leadership in all parties is dominated by men and — as a consequence of political party combinations — several male party leaders have to be accommodated on the same list of candidates, vastly diminishes equal opportunities for women to be prominently nominated on the list of candidates. Only one political party (DOE), has introduced an internal quota system, laying down in its by-laws that the Board will be composed of 50 per cent women and that it will strive for equal numbers of men and women in all positions.

Women's position in parliament

78. Since the last CEDAW report, women's position in parliament has declined. Until 2005 there has been a steady increase of the proportion of female representatives in parliament, from 18 per cent to 22 per cent. A drastic change came after the elections of 2010, when women's proportion dropped from 22 per cent to 10 per cent.

Position of women in the Council of Ministers

79. Women are structurally underrepresented in the Council of Ministers. From 2000-2005 the government had 18 ministers, two of which were female (11 per cent), i.e. the ministers of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs. During the 2005-2010 electoral period, the total number of ministers increased to 19, of which 4 were women (21 per cent), i.e. the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Labour, Technology and Environment, and Transport, Communication and Tourism.

80. At the start of the administrative period 2010-2015, two positions were held by women in the Council of Ministers. Due to reshuffling of ministers, in 2012 there were 4 female ministers in the Council, but from 2013 on there was only one female minister left, a decrease from 24 per cent to 6 per cent.

81. There is a trend worldwide that women ministers tend to hold 'soft' and less powerful portfolios, but although underrepresented, this is not the case in Suriname, since female ministers have penetrated the policy areas of foreign affairs and finance, while one woman held the post of deputy minister of Public Works.

Position of women in local government

82. Contrary to the position of women at parliamentary level, the participation of women at local political level has improved. For instance, the proportion of female members of the District Councils increased in the same period from 18 per cent to 25 per cent and 32 per cent, while the Resort Councils showed an increase of 25 per cent, 31 per cent and 35 per cent.

83. Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of female District Commissioners increased from 0 per cent in 2000 to 27 per cent in 2010.

Women in High Organs of State

84. Contrary to the position of women members of parliament and women ministers, there is a notable increase in the position of women in the High Organs of State.

85. During ten years (2000-2010) the State Advisory Council counted only one woman (6 per cent). In 2010, the number increased from one to three (20 per cent) and since July 2012 to four (25 per cent). From 2000-2005 there were no women members of the Independent Electoral Council. The proportion of women increased from 0 per cent to 40 per cent during 2005-2010 and in 2010 to 57 per cent. In the National Electoral Office, the proportion of women increased from 44 per cent to 46 per cent between 2000 and 2005. It decreased to 42 per cent in 2010. Although women's proportion had increased dramatically since 2000, there was no change in the chairing positions of all these institutions, which has never been held by a woman, with the exception of the National Audit Office, which is being chaired by a woman since 2011 and the Independent Electoral Council (since 2005).

86. The Labour Advisory Council showed a more or less steady proportion of 50 per cent women.

Women's participation in the Court of Justice

87. From 2000 to 2007 the Court of Justice was a male dominated body with only 10 per cent women. Since 2008, the number of female judges started to increase and by 2009 there was 50 per cent representation of women judges in this Court of Justice. From 2010 the female judges dominated, the proportion of female judges to male judges being 53 per cent in 2010 and increased to 63 per cent in 2013. Women also clearly dominate in the public prosecutor's office: 6 male (29 per cent) to 15 female (71 per cent) prosecutors.

Women's participation in decision-making in the business sector

88. Although national data on the position of women in higher education show that women pursue higher education more than men, data gathered through the Suriname Enterprise Survey, Compete Caribbean 2011, show gender inequality in privately owned domestic firms, particularly in the manufacturing and services sector. The survey suggests that firms with women in management positions or with women in ownership positions in the services industry are most likely to be foreign-owned.

89. The Suriname Enterprise data furthermore suggest that Suriname's female participation rate in top management is lowest among Latin American and Caribbean countries. Suriname has the lowest percentage of firms with female participation in ownership, 18.3 per cent (40.4 per cent for LAC), as well as one of the lowest percentages of women in top management positions, 15 per cent.

Article 8
International participation

90. Women have fully participated in Suriname's Foreign Service in many aspects. For the first time in history women have been appointed to the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 2000 and in 2005, while the first female Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served from 2008 to 2010 and from 2013.

91. Women have penetrated in the higher-level positions such as Ambassador and Consul General, which, until 2000 were predominated by men. The proportion of female-headed embassies increased from 8 per cent in 2000 to 44 per cent in 2012, while the proportion of female Consuls-General in the same period has remained stable at 50 per cent.

92. Secondly, women also hold strong managerial positions in the Ministry. In 2002, 21 out of 36 Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary positions were held by women. Women were dominant in Consular Affairs, Geopolitical Affairs, Development Cooperation and International Trade, and Regional Integration. At the level of Heads of Departments of Juridical Affairs and Treaties, Protocol and Documentation and Information, the positions were filled by women who accounted for 100 per cent.

93. Through observation a cautious conclusion can be drawn that Suriname is well represented by female civil servants as well as women from NGOs in meetings of international and regional women's organizations.

94. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also takes into account the gender dimension in delegating persons to foreign missions. In practice, preferential treatment for women is applied despite the fact that a preferential policy is not explicitly laid down.

Article 9
Nationality

Equal rights for women to acquire, change or retain their nationality

95. In July 2014, the Law of 1975 on Regulation of the Surinamese Nationality and Residency was amended. The amendment includes the removal of gender discriminatory provisions regarding the acquisition and loss of nationality in the context of marriage and divorce.

Equal rights between women and men with respect to the nationality of their children

96. The 2014 amendment of the Law on Regulation of the Surinamese Nationality and Residency also changed the situation with regard to the nationality of children. According to the 1975 law (as last amended in 2002), the child of a Surinamese woman born out of wedlock and not recognized by the father only acquired Surinamese nationality if that child was born in Suriname (Article 3(c)), and would otherwise be stateless (Article 4(b)), whilst the child of a Surinamese man acquired Surinamese nationality regardless of its place of birth (Article 3(a)). These provisions were in violation of CEDAW, Article 9 (2).

97. According to the July 2014 law, a child is now granted Surinamese nationality automatically if its father or mother is Surinamese at the time of its birth (Article 3(a) as amended) and the other conditions for a woman to confer her nationality to her child have been removed. The explanatory note to the law states that this amendment "demonstrates the full equality of man and woman (father and mother) before the law in the establishment of the nationality of the child at birth".

98. Article 3(c) of the 2014 law retains the provision of the 1975 law, granting Surinamese nationality to any child born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless, and Article 4(b) retains the provision, granting Surinamese nationality to foundlings or abandoned children in the country, whose parents are unknown.

Article 10
Education

General educational situation of women in Suriname

Enrolment of women in education

99. As reported previously, Suriname has compulsory education from age 7 to age 12. The net enrolment ratio in primary education shows an increase from 91 per cent in 2005 to 97 per cent in 2013. The net enrolment rate for male pupils increased from 91 per cent in 2005 to 96 per cent in 2013 and for female pupils from 90 per cent to 98 per cent in the respective periods. According to MICS 2010, there was an

increase in the proportion of children entering first grade of primary school and reaching grade 5, from 94 per cent in 2004 to 96 per cent in 2010.

100. Women have made notable progress at all levels of education since the last CEDAW Suriname report. At the primary level the enrolment of boys is slightly higher compared to girls. In the first 3 grades girls account for 46 per cent compared to boys (47.5 per cent), while in the sixth grades more girls than boys have been enrolled (54.2 per cent). Within the school year 2008-2009, more female (65.7) than male (34.3 per cent) students have been enrolled from the secondary to tertiary level education. At the junior secondary level the proportion of girls is 51.5 per cent and at the senior secondary level 58.4 per cent.

101. Women account for almost two thirds of the total students at Anton de Kom University of Suriname; Institute for the Training of Teachers (IOL) for teaching at secondary level; Institute for the training of Teachers for the Basic Level (LOBO); Polytechnic College (PTC); and Academy for Art and Culture (AHKCO).

102. Data collected through the 8th Census (2012) show that the proportion of persons in Suriname with university education has increased from a total of 7,959 in 2004 (of which 3,702 are women) to 12,797 (of which 6,770 are women).

103. The gender parity index shows clearly that female pupils and students perform better at almost all educational levels and that Suriname has almost reached the MDG targets for enrolment of women in education.

104. Although the picture is very positive from the perspective of enrolment of female pupils and students at all educational levels, there are still some issues which need government attention in the sphere of gender equality in education, among which disparities between regions and the fact that less girls than boys start primary school.

105. In general, women dominate the teaching professions, but there are differences between the various teaching levels. Women accounted for:

- 94 per cent of primary school teaching staff (period 2010-2013);
- 75 per cent of lower (junior) secondary teaching staff (period 2010-2012);
- 66 per cent of upper (senior) secondary teaching staff (period 2010-2011).

106. At the ADEKUS more men than women account for the majority of the teaching staff. Especially within the Faculty of Technological Sciences and the Faculty of Medical Sciences the presence of male lecturers is two to three times the presence of female lecturers.

107. As of the academic year 2005-2006, the presence of female students is two times the presence of male students. In e.g. the academic year 2012-2013, 2738 (68 per cent) out of 4001 students were female. A majority (1898) of these female students were enrolled at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

108. Within the Faculty of Technological Sciences there was a low enrolment of female students in the fields of Electrical Engineering (39 per cent) and Mechanical Engineering (32 per cent), but a high enrolment in other fields such as Environmental Sciences (77 per cent), Agricultural Production (83 per cent), Infrastructure (54 per cent) and Mineral Production (62 per cent). This is also the

case within the Faculty of Medical Sciences (Physiotherapy (75 per cent), Medical Sciences (56 per cent) and in all fields of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

109. While women account for a higher proportion of students at all existing levels, they are enrolled mainly in female-dominated areas of all existing technical and vocational education. Thus, despite the fact that girls/women have a higher enrolment and better performance results in education, inequality in the labour market will persist since women have less access to non-traditional jobs and management positions at all levels, even if they are higher educated than men (*2010 Census*).

110. According to data of the 2012 Census, 43 per cent of the Surinamese population attained primary school as the highest educational level, while 31 per cent did not continue education after secondary junior level. The proportion of persons that finalized tertiary education is only 5.4 per cent, of which 2.4 per cent is a university graduate (*2010 Census*).

Literacy rates and adult education programmes

111. The MICS 2010 Suriname study showed that in 2010, 92 per cent of women aged 15-24 years were literate, that literacy rates in urban areas (96 per cent) are higher than those in rural areas (80 per cent) and have been observed to be substantially lower in the rural interior (54 per cent) than in the rural coastal areas (93 per cent).

112. The government positively contributes to literacy by providing adult education to those who have not been able to enrol in education at an early age. The adult education programmes "Bigi Suma Skoro" include four stages of one year, starting with literacy classes up to the 6th grade of primary education. The classes are well spread over the district of Paramaribo and several other districts. Participants are aged 18 to 71 years, the majority being women. From 2011 to 2012, 88 per cent of applicants for adult education classes were women of which 83 per cent women participated in these classes.

Prevention of dropouts as a result of adolescent pregnancies

113. Guaranteeing access to education by teenage mothers has special attention of the Government, because teenagers who become pregnant are more likely to drop out of school. Since 1988, the Government is implementing a programme that provides support and counselling to teenage mothers who make the choice to re-entry school and register mandatory for participation. The focus of this Teen Mothers Programme (*Project Scholieren Moeders*) is empowerment with tools to continue school, prevent future unintended pregnancies and increase chances for the labour market. Its headquarters is in Paramaribo, but teen mothers from the districts of Commewijne, Para and Wanica may also participate. At present a special decentralized programme is being prepared for the Districts of Marowijne and Para. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs runs this programme, while the Ministry of Education provides support by developing and implementing regulations to prevent removal from school or provide for the re-entry of pregnant teen girls in school.

The same opportunities for boys and girls to benefit from scholarships

114. Entrance fees for participation in primary and junior secondary education have been removed since school year 2012-2013, and a large number of schools and classrooms have been built from 2012 onwards in order to increase enrolment of children in the interior.

115. In order to guarantee and increase access of children of all social classes to all levels of education, the government provides financial support (grants) to children of lower income and poor families.

116. The Bureau for Educational Information and Study Facilities (B.O.S.) of the Ministry of Education provides information on possibilities to study in Suriname and abroad. In addition, career counselling is provided by the Youth Welfare Foundation of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs through media and annual expositions.

117. In July 2009, the Government established the Study Finance Fund, awarding loans upon application to students of higher education with an interest rate of 4 per cent. This fund is managed by the National Development Bank. Since the establishment of this fund, more women than men have been granted loans. In the period 2010-2014, from the total of 1506 grants, 1056 were awarded to women and 450 to men. The major beneficiaries are from the District of Paramaribo, followed by the District of Wanica.

118. University students only pay entrance fee and no college fees. All students have the opportunity to apply for a study grant through the University Board. Students also have an option to make use of a special window for student loans, which is made available by local banks, i.e. the Hakrinbank and the National Development Bank.

Article 11
Labour

Government employment policies and labour legislation

119. There are no laws that differentiate based on gender regarding the right to work, men and women have the right to equal remuneration for the same work or position, and all are free to develop their economic opportunities as preferred. Regulations regarding labour for the private sector are included in the Civil Code and for the public sector in the Act on the Regulation of the Legal Status of Civil Servants.

120. The National Development Plan 2006-2011 and the Development Plan 2012-2016 both state that employment is crucial for the well-being and welfare of people. As such, government policy focuses on the creation of sufficient employment opportunities with adequate remuneration, social security and protection. Measures to increase employment opportunities are directly related to poverty reduction. To eradicate poverty and strengthen social protection, a National Social Security System has been established through the adoption and implementation of three social laws, namely the Minimum Hour Wage Act, the National Pension Benefits Act and the National Basic Health Insurance Act. Major beneficiaries of these

interventions are women, considering their overrepresentation in lower income groups and the growing number of female heads of households.

121. The Government has committed itself to ratify ILO Convention 111, but there is no national job classification and remuneration system in place in particular for the private sector.

Right to choose a job

Economic active women

122. Compared to data from the 2004 Census, the data collected from the 8th Census in 2012 show that in *absolute* terms women's' employment shows a large increase: in 2012 35 per cent more women were employed compared to 2004. The female population age group 15-64 increased with 13 per cent during the same period. This means that more employment was available for women and that relatively more women used their right to paid work. A closer look shows that the number of employed women in a percentage of the total female population aged 15-64, increased with only 6 per cent within 8 years, compared to an increase of 15 per cent for men in the same age group.

123. According to the last Census (2012), women have a higher representation (47 per cent) than men (21 per cent) in occupations which require higher education, while men are proportionally better represented (73 per cent) in the occupations which require less education or vocational training. This is related to the fact that in recent years, the number of women who graduate from university is much higher than the number of men, as explained in the previous chapter.

Women's unemployment rate

124. The overall unemployment rate increased from 9 per cent in 2004 to 10 per cent in 2012. The rate for women increased with 1 per cent, while the rate for men remained the same. Of all economically active unemployed persons, 60 per cent were women and 40 per cent were men. The share of women in the unemployed category increased from 53 per cent in 2004 to 60 per cent in 2012, while the share of men decreased from 47 per cent to 40 per cent.

125. From 2010 to 2013 about 60-75 per cent of registered job-seekers were women. According to the Ministry of Labour, about one third of the registered job-seekers succeeded in finding a job with the assistance of the Ministry of Labour.

Right to vocational training

126. The Ministry of Labour has initiated some activities to encourage women to participate in vocational training opportunities provided by the Ministry and to improve access to employment of vulnerable groups, as follows:

127. An initiative of the Ministry to involve jobseekers in a housing project (2012-2013) resulted in the participation of 116 persons, 5 of which were women (4 per cent), in a special free of charge training and coaching activities.

128. The vocational training institute (SAO) of the Ministry of Labour provides schooling, re-training and further training of job-seekers, drop-outs and workers on

behalf of the Labour Market. Besides expanding the different types of training options, training is also offered in rural areas to increase accessibility for this target group. The participation rate of women in training courses is 48 per cent. In general, women participants in SAO training courses tend to make choices for subjects like Nail Decorations, Pedicure, Manicure, Face Treatment, Hairdressing, Nurse-maid, Textiles, Home Care. Men tend to participate in SAO courses like Auto Mechanics, Computer Hardware, Defensive Driving, Electro Techniques, Installer of Gas, Water and Sanitation, Cooling Techniques, Welding, Operation of Excavator, Installation of Power Units, Organization and Management. SAO has not yet been able to deal with this problem of segregation in vocational training choices and practices.

129. Foundation Productive Work Units (SPWE), a Department of the Ministry of Labour, offers coaching and training to micro and small entrepreneurs. Women's participation in these courses and programs is very high, i.e. 59 per cent in training courses and 88 per cent in coaching programmes during 2010-2013.

130. The Ministry of Home Affairs also provides educational courses to civil servants. Over the past 10 years, more women than men have enrolled in these courses (V.A.A.O 1st yr., 89 per cent; V.A.A.O 2nd yr, 87 per cent; Pre-training *'Surnumerair'* (84 per cent); *'Surnumerair'* (83 per cent).

Right to equal remuneration and benefits

131. No statistics are available on incomes of employed persons by sex and per sector over the 2002-2014 period. There are also no data available regarding differences in salaries between men and women with the same job under equal qualifications. There are also no complaints filed at the Ministry of Labour on this matter. The public sector maintains a fixed salary wage for officials (FISO). Private companies with a Collective Labour Agreement also have wage ranges. With regard to the smaller companies, it is unclear how the wage structure looks like.

Equal protection against arbitrary dismissal

132. Women as well as men are protected against arbitrary dismissal of employees through the law "Dismissal Permits" ('Ontslagvergunning'). This law determines that an employer is required to obtain a permit from the Ministry of Labour for immediate dismissal of an employee.

Protection of women against discrimination based on maternity

Paid leave, including maternity leave

133. According to Article 35 of the Constitution, working women have the right to maternity leave while keeping their salary. Their payment does not vary according to specific variables. In practice, paid maternity leave is covered for civil servants (during 12 weeks) and for private companies with a Collective Labour Agreement, however, due to the absence of national legislation on maternity leave, large groups of working women in the informal sector and small businesses sector are still not entitled to these maternity rights. In the Draft Revised Civil Code, paid maternity leave by all employers is made mandatory, however it is not clear when this law will be approved.

134. In 2003, the Government Act on Maternity Leave was revised and made more flexible: instead of the former compulsory 6 weeks before and 6 weeks maternity leave after child birth, pregnant women can, after consultation with a doctor, continue to work up to two weeks prior to childbirth.

135. Apart from maternity leave, women have the same rights as men regarding paid leave in general for a maximum number of days annually, without the risk of losing their job.

Protective legislation

Sexual harassment at the workplace

136. Draft legislation on "Sexual harassment at the Workplace" has been formulated as a combined effort of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the NGO Ilse Henar Foundation for Women's Rights, as a result of the 3 year programme (2008-2011) on the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace, as implemented by this NGO. As part of the programme, research on the occurrence and nature of sexual harassment was conducted at ten companies, which provided detailed input for the development of a Model Code of Conduct and a Model Policy on Sexual Harassment for Companies. Policy on sexual harassment had been formulated for eight companies and ministries, among which the Ministry of Justice and Police and the Ministry of Labour. The draft law has been discussed at several national platforms, involving all relevant stakeholders.

Article 12
Health

137. Significant interventions by the Ministry of Health in various areas which involve the health situation and health development of women, have contributed to increased women's access to health services with a focus on the following areas:

- Policy development
- Life expectancy
- Maternal health
- HIV/AIDS/STI
- Cervical cancer treatment
- Improved data collection.

Policy development

138. The Ministry of Health has developed some significant policies and plans of actions, aimed at increasing access for women to health, guided by a human rights based approach and a gender perspective:

- National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of Cervical Cancer 2003-2009
- National Strategic Plan HIV 2004-2008 and 2009-2013; 2014-2020

- National Strategic Plan Renewal and Strengthening of Primary Health Care 2014-2018
- Safe Motherhood and Neonatal Health Action Plan, based on the Safe Motherhood
- Needs Assessment 2014
- National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy of Suriname, 2013-2017.

Improved life expectancy of women

139. The overall life expectancy at birth increased from 65.9 to 70.8 years between 1980 and 2012.

Improved maternal health

140. In order to report on the progress with regard to maternal health, it is worth mentioning achievements made in the areas of reducing maternal mortality, improved birth attendance by skilled personnel and increased access to reproductive health.

Reduced maternal mortality

141. With regard to the maternal mortality ratio, a variety of nationwide and community based initiatives have successfully been developed to contribute in achieving a reduction of maternal mortality. As a result, maternal mortality ratio has dropped from 153 in 2000 to 82.5 in 2011. Since 2009 the decrease is very remarkable, when the ratio was 122.5. In 2012 another notable fall was registered when the rate was calculated at 48.9.

142. Most important causes of maternal mortality as registered are Pregnancy Induced Hypertension (PIH), excessive loss of blood (HPP) and complications during pregnancy, delivery or in puerperium.

Birth attendance of skilled personnel

143. According to data collected through MICS in 2010, 94.3 per cent of all deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel (MICS 2010) compared to 93.4 per cent in 2006. According to MICS 2010 a proportion of 92.3 per cent of all deliveries took place in a health facility of which 71.5 per cent in a public health facility and 20.8 per cent in a private health facility, while 3.9 per cent of the deliveries took place at home (MICS 2010).

144. Notwithstanding, the National Safe Motherhood Assessment of 2011 recorded a great need for rapid expansion and scale-up of the number of midwives and others with midwifery competencies and quality of midwifery care to meet the demand.

145. The regulation, accreditation, proper delegation of authority and supportive supervision of midwives was considered of equal importance.

146. Attendance of births by skilled personnel is more frequent in urban areas (96.5 per cent in 2006) than in rural areas (MICS 2006). In 2008 the Medical Mission

reported that 83 per cent of deliveries in the interior were attended by trained personnel, while 11 per cent were attended by a traditional midwife and 1 per cent had no special skilled support. Data will be made available through new MICS.

Increased access to reproductive health

147. To measure progress with regard to increased access to reproductive health, data has been gathered on the contraceptive prevalence rate, the adolescence birth rate, antenatal care and needs for family planning.

Increased contraceptive prevalence rate

148. According to the 2010 MICS report, the use of contraception was reported by 48 per cent of women currently married or in union, compared to 42 per cent in 2000. The most popular method was oral contraceptive (the pill), which was used by one out of four married women in Suriname (25 per cent in 2000 as well). The second most prevalent method was female sterilization, which accounted for 11 per cent of married women (9 per cent in 2000). Variable proportions ranging between 2-5 per cent of women reported the use of Intra-Uterine Devices (IUD), injectables, and the male condom. Less than 1 per cent used periodic abstinence, withdrawal, male sterilization, implants, the female condom, or any other method (same in 2000).

149. Contraceptive prevalence was highest in some rural districts: Commewijne (62 per cent), Wanica (52 per cent), Nickerie (51 per cent) and Saramacca (54 per cent). Prevalence according to the 2000 MICS report was 45 per cent for rural areas. In 2010, two districts in the interior had the lowest contraceptive prevalence: Brokopondo (26 per cent) and Sipaliwini (25 per cent), but compared to 3.7 per cent in 2000, contraceptive use was 7 times higher than a decade ago. There are no specific plans in place for increased contraceptive prevalence of the underserved populations, e.g. Maroons and Indigenous populations in the rural interior.

150. In 2000, women in the age group 20-29 years were the dominant users of contraceptives (50 per cent); in 2010 contraceptive prevalence was highest among women of the age group 35-39 years (56 per cent). Within the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 years, respectively 42 per cent and 41 per cent reported using contraception. New data after 2010 will be made available through the new MICS.

Lower adolescent birth rate

151. Because both the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and the General Fertility Rate (GFR) fluctuated between 2000 and 2007, there is no clear indication whether fertility has increased or decreased in this period. The Gross Reproduction Rate (GRR) for 2007 was 1.19.

152. Data provided by the most recent 2012 Census enables a comparison between 2011 and 2012: the adolescent birth rate decreased from 58.0 births for women aged 15-19 years in 2011 to 51.9 births for the same age group (data from 2012 Census Volume I, page 36). Article 10 deals with government intervention to reduce adolescent pregnancies.

Improved antenatal care

153. Overall coverage was at 94.9 per cent in 2010 (MICS). Mother and child care is traditionally considered an important task of the Ministry of Health. The Bureau for Public Health (BOG) prepares and guides implementation of the policies regarding prenatal care for health centres, day-care centres and school children. Prenatal guidance is available through the outpatients' units of the Regional Health Department, the Medical Mission health centres, and private physicians, while after-delivery care and guidance is provided through health centres and well-baby clinics.

Unmet need for family planning

154. In 2010, national unmet need for family planning was determined at 16.9 per cent, with highest unmet need among women in the interior: 34 per cent (MICS 2010). Due to relatively low use of contraceptives, the risk of unintended pregnancy is high, resulting in an estimated amount of 5,000 to 10,000 abortions per year, which is a rate of 43 to 86 abortions per 1,000 women, aged 15-44 years (Report Terborg, J. 2011). Data after 2010 will be made available through new MICS.

155. There are no specific plans in place to tackle this problem of low use of contraceptives in the interior of Suriname.

Progress with regard to combating HIV/AIDS

156. In general, Suriname reports progress with regard to combating HIV/AIDS:

- ARV are available free of charge since 2005
- Production of 3 HIV treatment guidelines in 2009
- Increased access to HIV/AIDS testing and possibilities for Early Infant Diagnosis of HIV/AIDS (available free of charge)
- NGOs are involved in providing HIV/AIDS services.

Progress related to women as registered between 2002 and 2014:

- Improved registration of HIV/AIDS diagnosed persons at national level, resulting in more reliable data regarding the burden of disease, disaggregated by sex and age.
- Screening of pregnant women: pregnant women constitute a cross-section of the general, sexually active population and therefore provide a reasonable estimation of the extent to which HIV has spread among the population. Screening of pregnant women on HIV/AIDS has started since 2003, when the HIV test was incorporated in the regular blood control of all pregnant women. Those women who have been tested HIV positive are being coached and provided with Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) during and after pregnancy. Treatment of babies involved is included. Since the introduction of this screening programme, the proportion of pregnant women being screened on HIV/AIDS has increased from 30 per cent in 2003 to 75 per cent in 2005 and 84 per cent in 2010. Currently the test coverage is approximately 90-95 per cent.

- With the launch of the programme to prevent Mother-to-Child-Transmission of HIV, congenital syphilis and hepatitis B in 2009 (PMTCT), various new initiatives have taken place. The National Aids Programme (NAP) implemented a national awareness programme for PMTCT. A focal point system was installed to monitor all HIV positive pregnant women and their babies, a PMTCT workgroup was installed, PMTCT protocol was updated, and capacity building has taken place. This has led to a reduction of the transmission from mother to child from 10 per cent to 5 per cent in the period 2009 to 2012. Preliminary data for 2013 give a prevalence of 0 per cent of HIV among children born out of HIV positive mothers.

- Decrease of HIV/AIDS prevalence: HIV prevalence jumped from the 10th place on the list of death causes to the 5th place for the period 2000-2005, which was a very alarming trend. UNAIDS (2008) indicated for the same period that prevalence of male and female of the age group 15-29 years was respectively 2.7 per cent and 1.4 per cent, the highest score of the Latin-American and Caribbean region and one of the top 3 scores of the Caribbean region.

- Fortunately, between 2007 and 2011 there has been a steady decline with regard to the number of newly registered HIV-cases, from 683 new cases in 2007 to 486 cases in 2011. Deaths due to AIDS dropped from 181 in 2005, to 105 in 2011 (Suriname, AIDS Response Progress Report 2012-2014). Although still high, during ten years the HIV proportion of pregnant women remained stable around 1 per cent.

- The prevalence of HIV among young women and men aged 15-24 dropped slightly from 1 per cent in 2006 to 0.9 per cent respectively in 2007 and 2008 and further to 0.7 in 2010.

- With regard to prevalence of HIV/AIDS some risk groups need special attention. This is the case for commercial sex workers and women of the interior.

- A study of 2004 conducted by CAREC in cooperation with the Maxilinder Foundation in Paramaribo among sex workers recorded that more than one third of male (36.2 per cent) and one fifth of female sex workers (21.7 per cent) was HIV positive. A more recent study of CAREC (2012) pointed out a larger discrepancy between male and female sex workers: 30.8 per cent of male compared to only 3.8 per cent of female sex workers.

- In addition attention from the government is needed for:

    - Continued and effective promotion of consistent condom use and sufficient availability of affordable condoms;

    - Strengthening of care for HIV positive persons to enhance HIV treatment, adherence and counselling;

    - Early detection of HIV, especially among males;

    - Reduction of stigma and discrimination on all levels of care, especially among sexual minorities and women living with HIV; and

- Implementation of HIV prevention programs targeting married women and women in other conjugal relations.

- Increasing knowledge of HIV/AIDS within the age group 15-24 years: The percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission was 39.3 per cent in 2006 and 42.5 per cent in 2010. This comprehensive knowledge is highest in the urban areas (47 per cent) and lowest in the rural interior areas (21 per cent). In the coastal rural areas the proportion was 37 per cent.

- According to MICS 2010, overall, 93 per cent of Surinamese women know that HIV can be transmitted from mother to child. The proportion of women overall who know all three ways of mother-to-child transmission, however, decreased from 57.9 per cent in 2006 to 52 per cent in 2010, while 5 per cent of the women did not know of any specific way remained the same (5 per cent in 2006 and same in 2010).

- Increased access to treatment: according to the Suriname UNGASS Report 2012, the proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to HIV treatment increased from 27 per cent in 2004 to 81 per cent in 2012. Treatment of HIV positive pregnant women and their children increased from 64 per cent in 2006 to 98 per cent in 2011. In 2011, 98 per cent of the children born out of HIV positive women received treatment (Suriname UNGASS Report, 2012).

- An increasing number of people, adults and children, are on antiretroviral drugs. In 2008, the proportion of population with access to ART based on the national HIV treatment guidelines (persons are eligible to start with ART if the CD4 cell count is 200 cells/mm3 or less) increased from 62 per cent to 82 per cent in 2012.

Improved treatment of cervical cancer

157. According to the 2014 National Review BPfA+20, the main cause of death in Suriname is cardiovascular diseases, with an equal share of males and females, respectively 27.1 per cent in 2011. The second and third main cause of death among women is respectively cancers 14 per cent and Diabetes Mellitus (10 per cent). Alarming is women's share in cancers, in particular reproductive health cancers.

158. While overall cancer incidence is low, mortality incidence of cancers of the reproductive organs, in particular breast cancer and cervical cancer, places Suriname in the category of developing countries with the highest cervical cancer incidence rates.

159. The GOS has endorsed the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control commitment for the control and treatment of cervical cancer. Both Government and NGOs (especially the Family Planning Association, '*Stichting Lobi*') have made efforts to address the problems posed by breast and cervical cancers via screening and treatment programmes. In addition, by 2012 the Government introduced the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination into the national immunization programme. HPV infection is a well-established cause of cervical cancer, with growing evidence of HPV being a relevant factor in

other anogenital cancers (anus, vulva, vagina and penis) and head and neck cancers. HPV types 16 and 18 are responsible for about 70 per cent of all cervical cancer cases worldwide.

160. Based on South American studies on conducting HPV detection tests in cervical samples, the HPV and Related Diseases Report states that about 14.4 per cent of women in the general population are estimated to harbour cervical HPV infection and 72 per cent of invasive cervical cancers are attributed to HPVs 16 or 18. The HPV vaccines prevent against HPV 16 and 18 infections and have the potential to reduce the incidence of cervical and other anogenital cancers.

Improved access of women to health insurance

161. Data derived from the 2004 and 2012 National Census show an increase of the proportion of the Surinamese population with health insurance coverage from 64 per cent in 2004 up to 77 per cent in 2012. No data are available by sex.

162. In preparation of the basic health insurance system, since 2013 all children aged 0-16 years and all senior citizens aged 60+ have access to health care, including those who were previously not covered.

Improved data collection on women's health

163. The Government and NGOs have produced a large number of studies on maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/STI, adolescents' health, SRH indicators, quality of care, and sex workers. The Multi Cluster Indicators Survey (MICS) that has been conducted in 2000, 2006 and 2010 is a valuable national source on women's health.

Article 13
Social and economic life

164. A priority of the Government is to realize a national social security plan. After deliberations and tripartite consultations, proposals for a Minimum Hour Wage Act, a National Pension Benefits Act and a National Health Insurance Act have been approved by the National Assembly in August 2014. These Acts will also serve the purpose of regulating the informal economy.

Access to family benefits

165. As previously reported, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing provides some family benefits, including General Old Age Allowance (*AOV*), Financial Assistance (*FB*), Medical Assistance for Disadvantaged Groups (*GH*), Child Allowance (*AKB*), Financial Assistance for School Materials and Utensils, Financial Assistance for Calamities, and Financial Assistance for Medical Utensils. The Ministry provides subsidies for social institutions like children's homes, homes for disabled children, elderly homes and day-care centres (run by the Government). The Ministry is responsible for preparing the legislation for all these plans. The Ministry has prepared the Law on Social Shelters (*'Wet Opvanginstellingen'*), which was approved by parliament in 2014. The Law provides for the rules, regulations,

quality standards and obligations for the registration of social shelters for children, disabled persons and old age persons.

Senior citizens support plans

166. Suriname has several support systems for the elderly, among others:

- The Civil Servants Pension Fund (*Pensioenfonds Suriname*);
- The government manages a pension system granting a pension to Surinamese civil servants and employees of State-owned enterprises. In addition, the Governmental Pension Bureau manages a Widows Pension System for widows of civil servants and employees of State-owned enterprises. A comparison between 2002 and 2013 shows that the percentage of women receiving pension increased from 40 per cent to 44 per cent, while women receiving widow's pension, shows a slight decrease from 94 per cent in 2002 to 91 per cent in 2013.
- The General Old Age Allowance (*AOV*);
- A non-contributory social system, granted to all Surinamese who have lived in Suriname until the age of 60, also managed by the Government, i.e. the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. This benefit was increased from SRD 275 in 2008 to SRD 350 in 2010; to SRD 425 in 2011; and to SRD 525 monthly in 2012; a 90.9 per cent increase from 2007 to 2012. In 2011, a total number of 46,266 persons were eligible for this benefit, 55 per cent of whom were women.
- A comparison between 2002 and 2011 shows that the overall proportion of women beneficiaries remained stable between 54 per cent and 55 per cent respectively.

Child allowance

167. Child allowance for 4 children at the maximum was raised from SRD 3 to SRD 30 per child monthly since 2011 (900 per cent increase). Women account for the largest group of registered grantees. For the year 2013 the number of women registered as grantees was 34,713 (91 per cent) compared to 3183 men (9 per cent). The largest number of child allowance grantees (11,910 persons) was from the District of Paramaribo, of whom 93 per cent was female (11,124 women), followed by the District of Wanica and the District of Sipaliwini.

After school program

168. Children at primary level are eligible for participation in an after school program, during which they receive free meals, homework guidance and guidance in recreational and sports activities.

Financial assistance

169. Financial assistance is granted to poor individuals and households on subsistence level and has two components, namely Financial Assistance to Single Persons and Households, and Financial Assistance to Disabled Persons. The

Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has requested the Government to increase the assistance for single persons from SRD 33 to SRD 108 (227 per cent increase) and for households from SRD 40.50 to SRD 115.50, a 185 per cent increase.

170. The Disabled Persons Benefit was increased from SRD 150 to SRD 225 in 2011 (50 per cent increase). Women made up 56.5 per cent of the total number of grantees for financial assistance in 2009 (4347 of 7,696 persons).

Women as major beneficiaries of social benefit plans

171. Women's major presence as grantees for Financial Assistance and Child Allowance is related to their position as care takers in families and a relatively high prevalence of households headed by women, both in the coastal areas and in the interior.

Immaterial support services

172. In addition to material social benefits (food provision to social institutions and families and a community development programme) the Government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, provides immaterial services, such as coaching to families, elderly and disabled persons. Services to children include running a home for disintegrated youth, a vocational training programme for disabled youth and a telephone aid coaching service for children and youth. These service programmes focus on empowerment of families and individuals as an important tool to develop ownership and to reach sustainability.

Conditional cash transfers

173. In 2011, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) provided 15 million US Dollars for the execution of the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCT) run by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Health and Finance and other institutions. The programme focuses on conditional financial assistance related to the participation of children in education and in child health activities.

Access to adequate housing

174. The Government of Suriname, in collaboration with the private sector and NGOs, implemented the first Low Income Shelter Programme (LISP) 2003-2008 with the support of the IDB. LISP is designed for low-income households (earning between SRD 675 and SRD 900), providing them an opportunity to renovate their own home, or to build a new house for a maximum amount of USD 10,000, with coaching provided by NGOs and CBOs. LISP 1 resulted in the support of 891 newly built houses and 2,380 renovations and/or expansions of homes. Successful evaluations resulted in the implementation of the second LISP programme (2010-2015), which has been extended to rural districts and the interior and plans to build 3,100 homes within five years. In addition, the Government implements the Low-Middle Income Shelter Program (LMISP) for low or middle income households (SRD 900 to SRD 2,030 monthly). Loans are provided to a maximum of SRD 25,000 for renovation and SRD 50,000 for a new house at a low interest rate between 5-6 per cent. In addition, there is a window for 7 per cent loans to facilitate

construction of houses by families, guaranteed through a special cash reserve programme between the Central Bank of Suriname and local financial institutions.

175. Data provided by the LISP office show that 44 per cent of the support or subsidy for the ongoing LISP 2010-2015 Programme until June 2014 was granted to women.

Access to banks, mortgages and other types of financial credit

176. The Government, in collaboration with development partners, NGOs and the private sector (banks, credit cooperatives), has invested in the provision of microfinance credit to address immediate household needs of poor households, support women in the development of small-scale women businesses and increase access of female entrepreneurs to credits.

177. In this context, the Micro Credit Fund (*'Micro Kredietfonds'*) was established in February 2010, enabling small-scale entrepreneurs (the majority of whom is female) access to small loans from SRD 5,000 tot SRD 6,000 with or without collateral. The funds which were reserved for this programme are being managed by the *'Suritrust Bank'*, while loans are being provided through the Credit Cooperative *'De Schakel'* and through two NGOs, namely the Women Business Group Foundation and the SEWA Foundation.

Article 14
Rights of rural women

Importance of agriculture

178. With a traditional focus on mineral resources, agriculture contributes a relatively small share of gross domestic product, averaging 5-7 per cent annually. Much of this contribution comes from rice and banana production, shrimp and fish exports. Even though Suriname totals 6.4 million ha of land, of which 1.5 million ha is considered arable land, only a very small percentage of the population is currently engaged in agriculture, estimated at 15 per cent of the labour force. Agriculture is, however, critical to the targeted diversification of Suriname's economy towards its sustainable development, as presented in the current National Development Plan (2012-2016). The focus on agriculture will complement the Government's efforts at alleviating poverty, which is most evident in rural districts and in the interior where ethnic minorities live in tribal communities (Maroons and Indigenous people) and where agricultural activities are the main responsibility of women.

Access of rural women to social security

179. In general, women in the rural and rural interior areas make great use of the social security plans provided by government, such as child allowance, old age allowance, financial assistance and health assistance. According to the UNDAF report for the period 2002-2006, 91.4 per cent of people living in the interior of Suriname live in extreme poverty, and have low general scores in relation to the MDG indicators. Women and children are most vulnerable, especially as a consequence of mass urbanization of male and youth, in search of employment,

incomes, secondary and higher education, leaving women behind who, under these circumstances, end up as heads of households and sole earners of income.

180. Details regarding women's proportion in existing social security plans are provided under Article 13 of this report.

Access of rural women to health services

181. Providers of health care in the rural areas include government subsidized primary health care organizations for the poor and near poor, namely the Regional Health Service (RGD), a governmental body, which covers the coastal rural area, while the Medical Mission covers the population living in the rural interior. The Regional Health Service (RGD) covers approximately one third of Surinamese patients. The Medical Mission, an NGO which is approximately 75 per cent government subsidized, runs 56 health centres in the interior, providing services regarding reproductive health, traditional health, immunization, HIV/AIDS, and malaria. There is no information available on the proportion between male and female patients.

Antenatal care

182. Overall, the vast majority of women obtained antenatal care from a doctor (71 per cent), nurse (19 per cent), midwife or a community health worker (4 per cent), while 3 per cent received no antenatal care whatsoever (2010 MICS Suriname). In the rural interior, relatively smaller proportions of women obtained care from doctors, and relatively larger proportions obtained care from community health workers compared with any of the other regions. As much as 54 per cent of rural women claimed to have had such deliveries with assistance from a nurse/midwife, while 36 per cent claimed they had such assistance from doctors (table 14.1).

183. Attendance of births by skilled people is more frequent in urban areas than in rural areas. In 2008, the Medical Mission reported that 83 per cent of deliveries in the interior were attended by trained personnel, while 11 per cent was attended by a traditional midwife, and 1 per cent had no special skills support.

Contraceptive use

184. A 2010 MICS study found disparities in contraceptive use, with the lowest contraceptive use occurring in the rural interior. Though low, there is an increase in contraceptive use in the rural interior, from 14.6 per cent in 2006 to respectively 26 per cent and 25 per cent in the interior districts of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini, while the overall unmet need for contraception was 34 per cent (16.9 per cent overall in the country).

185. Tables on contraceptive prevalence rate, comparing the use of urban women versus rural women from 1992 to 2010, are included in Article 12 of this report.

HIV/AIDS

186. With regard to prevalence of HIV/AIDS, some risk groups need special attention. This is the case for sex workers and women of the interior, as indicated in Article 12 of this report. Overall, 43 per cent of women were found to have

comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention, but there are significant differences between the knowledge of women in urban areas (47 per cent), rural coastal areas (37 per cent) and the rural interior (20 per cent).

Access of rural women to economic opportunities

Rural poverty

187. The total labour force in 2012 is determined at 215,788. The number of employed and unemployed individuals in 2012 was respectively 188,229 and 27,559 with an unemployment rate of 12.8. Urban poverty exists but the main disadvantaged groups are the Maroons and Indigenous people living in the vast interior of the country. According to the PAHO, 69.2 per cent of Suriname's population is living under the national poverty line (Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis Energy Sector Suriname, February 2014). Several MICS-Suriname studies have shown a close relation between women's educational level, wealth of household and their sexual and reproductive health behaviour. Poor and low educated women tend to have higher fertility rates, relatively low use of contraceptives, are more at risk to become a teen mother, to get involved in high risk sex work, and to get infected with HIV (National Review BPfA+20, Suriname, May 2014).

Women in agriculture

188. Women fulfil many crucial roles as farmers, wage labourers and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as caretakers of children and the elderly and are therefore capable to lift their households and communities out of poverty. However, women still face persistent gender inequities that limit their access to land, credit, decent incomes, technologies, information, advisory services and training.

189. In the rural interior the traditional systems of subsistence farming is under pressure as a result of male migration to the coastal area and to the goldmines, in search for employment — many rural women have an increased workload and increased responsibilities. The majority of women in the interior cannot afford to pay for services to clear the land, increased food prices and education of their children, and as such are vulnerable to poverty.

190. Some NGOs like the National Women's Movement, the Pater Ahlbrinck Stichting (PAS) and Forum NGO have provided services to help tackle the problems women farmers are facing, in both the coastal rural and the rural interior areas, in the sphere of introducing commercial agriculture and assist in developing non-agriculture economic activities. Services provided are related to capacity development on entrepreneurship, establishment of local credit facilities, increased access to loans of formal credit institutions, access to markets and networks. The Godo Bank has established branches in the Upper Suriname River Area and in the District of Marowijne, bringing financial services and opportunities to access loans closer to these groups, since 2008. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries organizes national training courses "Stimulating Agro-Entrepreneurship", encouraging the participation of female producers. Data on the participation of women in these courses is not available.

191. Hence, the Government, i.e. the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries together with other ministries, still needs to formulate and implement policy on women economic development in the rural areas, including agriculture, coupled with an integrated programme that is based on a thorough analysis of the problems women farmers are facing at present.

Access of rural women to employment

192. Employment rates of Indigenous and Maroons are 6 per cent and 12 per cent lower than the rest of the Surinamese population (table 14.3). Among the Indigenous people the employment rate for women is about 10 per cent lower than men's, while among Maroon people the women's rate is 20 per cent lower than men's.

Rural women involved in gold mining

193. The presence of women in small-scale mining is 5-10 per cent. A number of these women own machines or operate as supervisor or are even owners of mines. The majority, however, works in the services sector in hotels, bars, restaurants, pharmacies, and beauty salons and as sex worker (Heemskerk 2003). No data is available to make a comparison with the present position of women.

Enjoyment of adequate living conditions

194. In general, results of national surveys affirm the relatively lower access of people, in particular women, living in the rural areas and the interior to adequate public services such as clean water and sanitation, housing, education, health and media.

Access to water and sanitation

195. MICS findings of 2010 compared to those of 2000 with regard to access of the rural population to adequate drinking water resources show a remarkable improvement. While in 2000, 92.6 per cent of urban and 66.6 per cent of rural population had access, this was respectively 99 per cent and 85 per cent in 2010. There is a marked difference between the urban and rural situation, which needs attention from policy makers. 2010 MICS found that for the majority of households without drinking water on the premises, an adult female is usually the person collecting water (74 per cent). 14 per cent of the households relied on adult males 15 years or older to collect drinking water and only 3 per cent on children.

196. According to 2010 MICS, 91 per cent of the population of Suriname were living in households using improved sanitation facilities, i.e. 98 per cent in urban areas, 71 per cent in rural areas and 42 per cent in the rural interior. In rural areas and in the rural interior, particularly in the districts of Sipaliwini, Brokopondo and Marowijne, the population was more likely to use pit latrines without slabs. Even more strikingly was the prevalence of no facilities in the rural interior at 35 per cent and 54 per cent in the districts of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini, respectively (2010 MICS).

197. In 2000, the proportion of the population living in households with sanitary means of excreta disposal was 88 per cent, also with vast differences between the urban (98 per cent) and rural interior regions (30.5 per cent).

Access to energy

198. Electricity usage in 2012 was 48 per cent residential, 34 per cent industrial/commercial and 18 per cent other sectors.

199. In the interior of Suriname small power systems exist, providing electric power to local villages, which are owned and operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources (*Dienst Electriciteits Voorziening*). In 2012, an estimated total of 130 villages had a diesel unit installed.

200. Overall, 85 per cent of households have access to electricity networks and approximate 16 per cent of the households use wood for fuel to cook, the latter mainly in rural interior areas.

Access to communication technology and media

201. In 2006, results of the 7th Census showed that 70 per cent of households have access to telecommunication, in 2010, this increased to 84 per cent, according to MICS. The MICS results show a discrepancy in access to cellular phones of 84 per cent in urban and 64.6 per cent in rural areas. The rural coastal areas had 68.9 per cent access compared to a 56.3 per cent access of rural interior areas (2010 MICS and General Bureau of Statistics 2006).

202. Much larger proportions of women were exposed to all media types (newspaper, radio, television) in urban areas (75 per cent) than in rural areas (44 per cent). In the rural interior, exposure to all three types of media was very low with only 13 per cent of women having exposure to all. Exposure of women to all three media was greatest in Paramaribo (77 per cent) and lowest in the District of Sipaliwini (9 per cent) as presented by MICS 2010.

203. Some activities have taken place in the sphere of ICT, like the opening of an E-learning centre in the Districts of Marowijne, (2011) and Para (two centres in 2012), the implementation of training by the Telecommunication Authority (TAS) in 2012, but the Government still has to develop a comprehensive programme regarding the promotion of ICT in rural communities.

Article 15
Equality before the law

204. Gender equality is prescribed by the Constitution of Suriname (Article 8, paragraph 2), and as such provides an important guideline for all laws, customs and conditions. As indicated in the Third Periodic CEDAW Report of the Republic of Suriname, this principle is not yet reflected in all statutory regulations. In this reporting period much progress has been made with regard to legal products that have been adopted by parliament, draft laws that have been submitted to parliament or in the process of drafting, as set out in Article 2 of this report.

205. This progress is the result of institutional measures taken by the Government and civil society to advocate for equal rights, equal protection by law and to combat gender based discrimination in all aspects of economic and social life. Indeed, as individuals, or organized in civil society or through state mechanisms, women constantly aim at drawing attention to the existing shortcomings and lobbying for new or adapted instruments to serve the needs and interests in defending and promoting their rights.

206. Apart from the progress in legislation, progress has been achieved in other fields:

- Ownership and discussion on most of the issues by the public at large, as opposed to ownership by only a select number of people in government, the judiciary or politics;
- Breaking with the false assumption that some values are private, traditional or cultural in order to justify or perpetuate gender inequality or male dominance (sexual harassment, (domestic) violence (against women), position of women in decision-making).

207. Although positive, there are some structural impediments to being successful in the national efforts to reach gender equality before the law, in the first place in the interpretation of gender in general and in the interpretation of legal instruments.

208. Strategies are needed to successfully deal with these impediments, in the sphere of continued gender sensitizing of the educational administration and teachers, of the justice and police administration, of decision-makers, the private sector and the media and in the sphere of strengthening women themselves through gender education, legal information and legal aid.

Article 16
Marriage and family relations

Same rights to enter into marriage

209. Regulations in the Civil Code regarding marriage were revised on June 23, 2003 (State Decree 2003 44). Although the amending law was approved by the National Assembly in 1973, it came into force in 2003. As a result, the Asian Marriage Law (the Hindu and the Muslim marriage Act) was dissolved. The revision was based among other things on a recommendation of the NBG to maintain one single marriage act, which would require parental approval up to the ages of 21 or 18, regardless of gender, thus prohibiting child marriages. The NBG based its recommendations on legal, administrative, social and practical objections against the implementation of two marriage laws, and the need for unity in the juridical system. The following changes have been implemented through this revised version:

- The revision allows all Surinamese the right to solemnize a religious marriage (according to Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or other religious traditions), which consequently gets the status of a legal marriage;

- There is uniformity in the age of consent for all Surinamese, while the age to enter into marriage has been raised from 13 to 15 years for girls and from 15 to 17 years for boys;
- The maximum age for parental approval was changed into up to 21 years (previously up to 30 years);
- Before the revision there were four cumulative grounds for divorce and now there is one general ground for divorce namely permanent breakdown of a marriage. This ground provides more possibilities for divorce.

Same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution

Penalizing Rape in Marriage and Cohabitation

210. Rape within marriage is now defined as a criminal offence since the revision of de Penal Code in 2009. The regulation has been formulated gender neutral, allowing the penalization of rape regardless of gender.

The same rights to decide on the number and spacing of children

Access to contraceptives

211. The provisions that penalized the persons who exhibited contraceptives for the prevention of pregnancies, offered contraceptives and contraceptives services and the publications for the prevention of pregnancies, have been banned in 2009. MICS used national indicators to show a slight increase in national prevalence of contraceptive use, from 42 per cent in 2000 to 47.6 per cent in 2010 (MICS surveys 2000, 2006, and 2010). According to MICS 2010, national unmet need for family planning was determined at 16.9 per cent, with highest unmet need among women in the interior, i.e. 34 per cent.

212. In 2005 the Ministry of Health launched a campaign aimed at introducing the female condom, which resulted in the provision of 100.000 female condoms to women, free of charge.

213. During some decades *'Stichting Lobi'*, a family planning NGO, offers a broad package of services in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, preventive testing of cervical cancer and breast cancer, contraceptives, HIV testing and counselling. In January 2009, *'Stichting Lobi'* and the Ministry of Health signed an agreement, granting *'Lobi'* responsibility for the national sexual and reproductive health policy.

214. The 2010 MICS study shows a correlation between women's poverty and their access to contraceptives. As contraceptives are less accessible to poor women, they have higher fertility rates, are more at risk to get infected with STD's or HIV-AIDS and have a higher risk to become a teen mother.

215. Based on a recommendation by the NBG on subsidization of contraceptives, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has developed policy to guarantee access for poor women to contraceptive use through a subsidy plan. In addition, all women who are insured through the State Insurance plan automatically have access to contraceptives (the pill).

216. In the interior, the Medical Mission provides information on family planning and contraceptive use and provides contraceptives for free. Through the National AIDS Programme condoms are being provided free of charge via several decentralized distribution centres in urban areas. The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Rachab Foundation (former Maxi Linder) provides condoms to HIV/AIDS risk groups, such as commercial sex workers.

The same rights and responsibilities as parents in matters relating to their children

Parental rights and responsibilities

217. In the Draft Revised Civil Code, the principle of equality with regard to parental authority and custody of children is underlined, stating that expenses by parents will be divided proportionally, according to their respective incomes.

Rights of children to be heard

218. The Law on the Right to be Heard was adopted by the National Assembly in February 2008. This Law provides for the hearing of minors in court decisions that impact their position in civil law cases, such as adoption procedures and custody matters related to divorce of parents. It is obligatory to hear children from 12 years of age, except when physically or psychologically the child is not in the position to be heard or when it is necessary to appoint a guardian for example in all cases where the parent has a conflict of interest with of his/her minor children. With the passing of this law the national legislation has been harmonized with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12).

Parental visitation rights

219. In December 2002, the Law on Parental Visitation Rights was passed, establishing visiting rights between parents who have not been granted custody of their minor children, both in situations of divorce and in situations other than divorce. This law is of great importance for a harmonious and balanced growth and socio-emotional development of children.

Nationality of Children

220. Article 3 of the Law on Nationality and Residency of 1975 states that a child who is born within marriage or born out of wedlock, but is legally recognized by its father who at the time of birth has the Surinamese nationality, automatically gets the Surinamese nationality. The Revised Law on Regulation Surinamese Nationality and Residency of 2014 states that "Surinamese by birth is the child, whose father or mother possesses the Surinamese nationality at the time of birth of the child."

The same personal rights as a wife

221. It is custom in Suriname that married women bear their husband's surname or bear the husband's surname prior to the own surname. If the Draft Civil Code is passed both married men and women are entitled to bear each other's surname or bear the other's surname prior to the own surname or bear the own surname prior to the other's surname. Moreover, one is not — as is the case in some countries —

legally obliged to use the own surname. A similar revision has been proposed in the Draft Civil Code regarding the name for children. For children who are born in marriage or who have been legally recognized by their father, both parents have the option to choose between the surname of the father, mother or a combination of both, in a sequence that they prefer. Whenever a surname has been chosen for the first child, the other children will automatically bear that surname.

222. The Ministry of Justice and Police is preparing legislation that no longer will oblige married women to use the surname of their husband on their identity card.

Amendment of the *'Personeelswet'*

223. Article 15 paragraph 1, Article 47 paragraph 9 and Article 69 paragraph 3 of the Act on the Regulation of the Legal Status of Civil Servants have been amended in the draft. According to Article 15.1 only married women are eligible to enter into a labour contract with the government.

224. Furthermore, Article 47 paragraph 9 holds that the active service is interrupted by exemption from service because of pregnancy and childbirth, with the result that the entitlement to annual leave is reduced. Article 69 paragraph 3 states that formally the government may terminate a labour contract with a female civil servant as she is getting married. Important to note is that the Articles 15 paragraph 1 and 69 paragraph 3 are not applied in practice.

The right of women to live their life free of violence

Domestic violence against women

225. Domestic violence against women has remained a serious problem. The Ministry of Justice and Police registered 9492 cases of domestic violence between 2008 and 2013, 67 per cent of which have been regarding violence against women. In 91 per cent of the cases the perpetrator was male. The number of cases is more or less stable at an average between 1400 and 1600 cases annually, with a peak of 1916 cases in 2009. Most cases are reported in the districts of Paramaribo (56.0 per cent), Wanica (24.1 per cent) and Nickerie.

226. The Ministry of Justice and Police provides resources for victims of domestic violence and continues to provide information on domestic violence through public television programs. There are victims rooms in several police stations in Paramaribo and Nickerie. Authorities have trained police units how to deal with survivors and perpetrators of sexual crimes and domestic violence. In 2013 judges have been trained, with regard to effective and efficient implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence. The Ministry of Justice and Police operates a shelter for survivors/victims of domestic violence, which provides care for up to 30 women and their children.

Violence, marriage and family rights

227. The Law on Combating Domestic Violence was passed in 2009, defining domestic violence as "any form of physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that is committed by a person against a partner, child, and elder, member of the family or needy irrespective where the violence takes place". The law imposes

sentences of four to eight years' imprisonment for violation of protection orders by the defendant.

228. Since the revision of the Penal Code in July 2009, rape and or sexual abuse within marriage are recognized as offences (Article 295, Penal Code). Sexual abuse of minors (the age has been raised to 16 years), as a form of sexual intimidation has been defined as a criminal offence. A National Action Plan on Domestic Violence has been drafted in July 2014 by the National Steering Committee on Domestic Violence (governmental) and the NGO National Platform on Domestic Violence. The National Action Plan contains steps to realize the basic conditions for implementation of the law, among which capacity development of counsellors and establishment of support systems.

Rights of Children

National Action Plan for Children

229. The National Action Plan for Children 2009-2014 includes various issues as derived from contributions from stakeholders, policy makers and youth during consultations, workshops and questionnaires and summarized in the Concluding Observations of the UN Child Rights Committee of the years 2000 and 2007. To carry out this plan the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is currently working on establishing a monitoring mechanism.

230. The issues related to family rights include:

- Improved legal protection of children and the promotion of the optimal experience of the principle of non-discrimination of all children;
- Reduction of all forms of violence against children especially at school, in the family and in child care centres.

Age to enter in marriage

231. Though the minimum age to enter into marriage has been revised in the 2003 Marriage Act, the minimum ages of 17 for boys and 15 for girls are still contradicting with the Convention on the Right of the Child and CEDAW.

232. According to the MICS 2010 report, about 12 per cent of all marriages in 2007 were of girls, aged 15-19. The report states that nationwide, approximately 12 per cent of women aged 15-19 years were married or in union.

233. The proportion of these marriages was the highest in households where the mother tongue is Javanese (19.2 per cent) and in the districts in the rural interior households (20.0 per cent). A large number of these girls had a husband 10 years older or more, i.e. 19.5 per cent currently married or in union in 2006. The proportion of young girls aged 20-24 married or in union with a husband 10 years older or more, was 22.6 per cent (2010 MICS).

234. In 2007, both the UN CEDAW Committee and the UN CRC Committee) have made recommendations to the government to raise the ages of consent to internationally agreed minimum ages of 18 for both boys and girls. This recommendation, which aims at harmonizing the Marriage Law with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has been incorporated in the Draft Revised Civil Code.

Social protection services to families

235. As part of its social protection policy the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is implementing a supply plan including material and immaterial social services that are accessible for both men and women. The package of basic social protection services include health cards to ensure free medical care, financial assistance for needy households and people with a disability, child allowance, old age allowance, and provision of school supplies. Family counselling and subsidies to institutions that take care of elderly, children and people with a disability, are also part of this subsidy plan.

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